



United Way of Connecticut

2-1-1

**Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing – March 4, 2011**

**Testimony Presented by United Way of Connecticut
on
Human Services Budget**

My name is Richard Porth. I serve as the CEO of United Way of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Governor Malloy's budget plan.

Beginning more than 35 years ago, succeeding Governors and legislatures have supported United Way of Connecticut/2-1-1 in its work to help Connecticut residents navigate the system to find services and simplify their access to necessary supports. We believe that Governor Malloy's budget plan for SFY 12 and 13 will enable United Way of Connecticut to maintain core safety net services in 2-1-1 and HUSKY Infoline. We thank Governor Malloy and we respectfully request that the General Assembly continue its ongoing support as we work together with the state to help people make a good life and contribute to Connecticut's vitality.

Connecticut was the first state in the country to authorize statewide three-digit 2-1-1 telephone service for residents who need help to find and access community and health and human services. This early state support was provided because 2-1-1 is easy for people to remember and because it simplifies what can be a complicated and frustrating process, particularly when services are provided across a number of state agencies and nonprofits. It was also seen as an investment in Connecticut's service delivery infrastructure enabling more cost-effective use of many different health and human services funded by various state agencies. When OPM's Secretary provided testimony in 1998 to the Department of Public Utility Control supporting the use of 2-1-1 in Connecticut by United Way of Connecticut, he said our service provides "one-stop shopping" for residents and has been a "tremendous success, worthy of ongoing public support".

Last year, 2-1-1's call centers received over 420,000 calls originating in every city and town in Connecticut. 2-1-1 operates around the clock, providing a multilingual staff of call specialists with bachelor's degrees or higher. Our health and human service database is Connecticut's most

comprehensive, up-to-date source for people seeking help and is also available online at www.211ct.org. In 2010, 211ct.org registered 578,000 visits, the vast majority of which were inquiries for information and access to a range of safety net and other services.

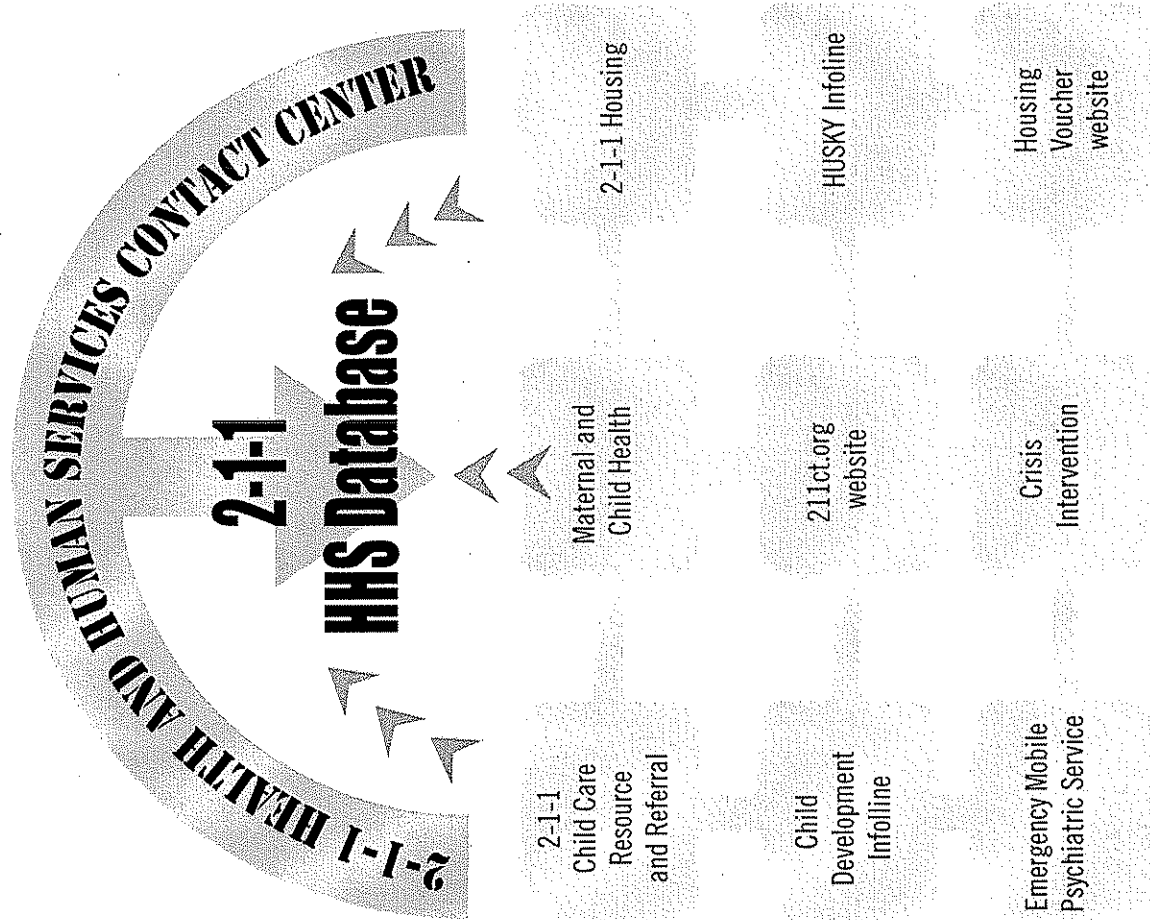
Looking forward, the state can leverage its earlier investments in one of Connecticut's oldest and most productive public-private partnerships by utilizing 2-1-1 as part of the solution in its renewed efforts to simplify and streamline access to services and supports, thus enhancing agency outcomes for a range of health and human services.

Our State-UWC/2-1-1 partnership has grown stronger over the years. For example:

- The 2-1-1 Contact Center has been built up over 35 plus years, adding **new components and services** such as 2-1-1 Child Care, HUSKY Infoline, and Child Development Infoline. These and other programs under the 2-1-1 umbrella are illustrated in Attachment A. They work together within 2-1-1 so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and so that each new state investment leverages earlier investments by the state and others.
- The state's support coupled with United Way support has also enabled 2-1-1 to build up and maintain the most comprehensive, up-to-date, **health and human services database** in Connecticut, including both government and nonprofit services for residents seeking help.
- 2-1-1 has increasingly served as a **statewide gateway for accessing key services**, including the Department of Developmental Services' (DSS) Birth to Three Program, the Department of Children and Family's (DCF) Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Service, and the most recent example the Department of Social Services' (DSS) Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program. (Illustrated in Attachment B.)
- The Governor and/or leadership in state agencies have called on 2-1-1 to help with **special projects** over the years, often on short notice. These have included outreach to residents on behalf of state agencies, rumor control and information dissemination during emergencies, and serving as a shelter clearinghouse during extreme cold spells.

We are proud of our partnership with the state. And, we continue to work hard to employ state funding prudently and to the best effect for the state and Connecticut residents. United Way of Connecticut/2-1-1 can be a significant part of the solution for some of the recommendations in the report of the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes and for the recommendations in the Governor's budget, as the state renews its focus on access to and coordination of services which help people make a good life in Connecticut.

2-1-1 PARTNERSHIP WITH STATE GOVERNMENT



2-1-1 is a service of the State of Connecticut and local United Ways.

BUILDING BLOCKS

- 30+ years partnership with State of Connecticut and United Way system
- Nimble, innovative response to state agency needs
- Connecticut's most comprehensive, up-to-date health and human services database
- Cross-cutting connections that can help integrate services provided by multiple state agencies
- 2-1-1: Ultimate statewide access point for information about health and human services
- Strong IT and telecommunications capacity

WORKING FEATURES

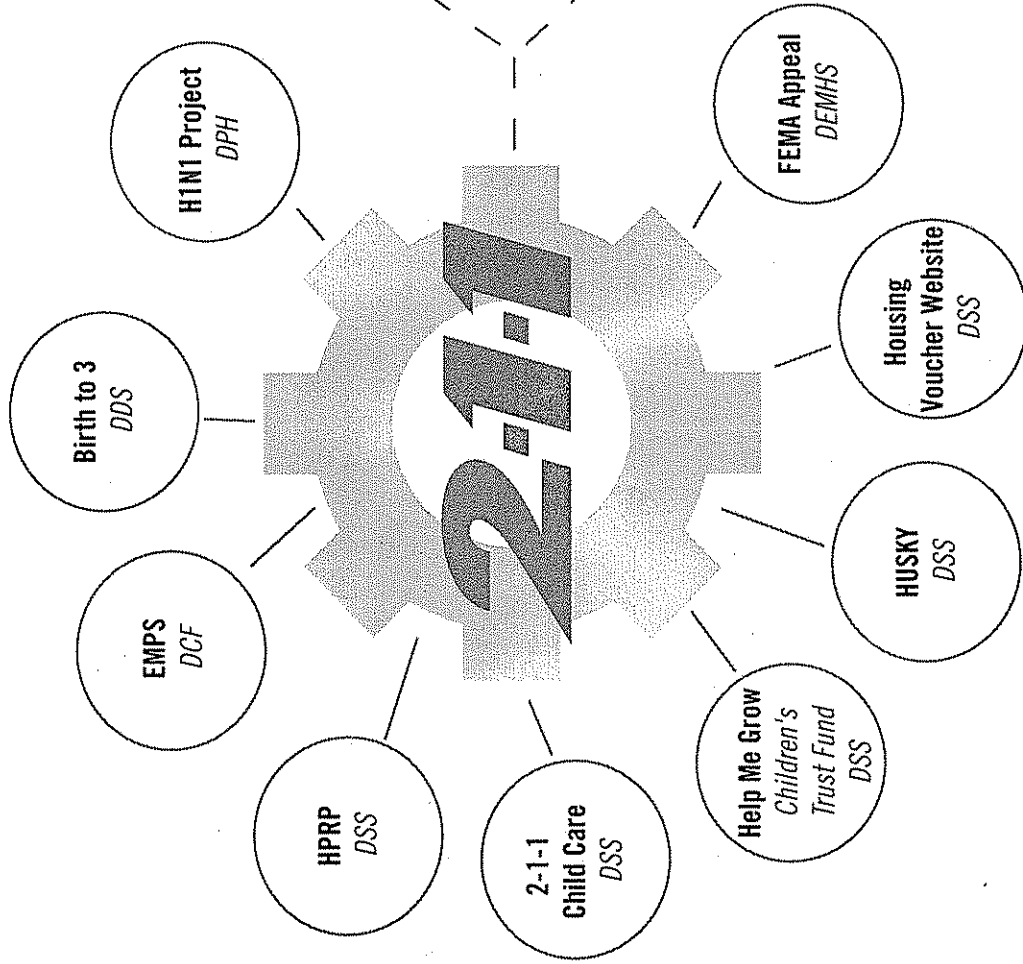
- Simple, easy to remember access: Dial 2-1-1
- 24 hours/365 days
- Multi-lingual, degreed call specialists
- Available to everyone in Connecticut
- Encouraging self-help
- Gateway to programs and services
- 2-1-1 Navigator benefits screener

SPECIAL SERVICES

- Client outreach/information dissemination
- Agency after hours call handling
- Response point for public awareness campaigns
- Custom databases/directories
- 2-1-1 research and reports/needs assessments

2-1-1'S IMPACT

- All 2-1-1 call centers received over 420,000 calls in 2010, originating in every city and town in the state.
- 2-1-1 maintains a comprehensive database of approximately 4,500 health and human service providers offering approximately 48,000 services and 4,800 licensed and licensed-exempt child care facilities.
- 2-1-1's database of resources is available and searchable online at www.211ct.org. In 2010, there were over 457,000 inquiries for services and over 578,000 visits to the 211ct.org site.



I am concerned because my 2-year-old son is not yet walking.

My child is in crisis.

Can my family get Section 8 supported housing?

Where can I get help paying for child care?

Where can I get an H1N1 vaccination?

Where can I report storm damage?

We may soon be homeless, can you help?

We don't have health insurance, but my child needs to see a doctor.

Where can I go for a cancer screening?

What type of child care is available in my town?